

your contributions, and there is a more hopeful future ahead. I ask all Americans to reach out to your neighbors in need and do your part to help our Nation win the fight against illegal drugs.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:55 a.m. on December 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jalal Talabani of Iraq in Baghdad, Iraq

December 14, 2008

**President Talabani.** Today we have the pleasure and honor of receiving our great friend for Iraqi people, President George W. Bush, who helped us to liberate our country and to reach this day, which we have democracy, human rights, and prosperity gradually in our country. Thanks to him and to his courageous leadership that we are here now in this building.

So we are very glad really to have him with us, and we discussed with him all our problems very frankly and friendly. And we hope that we will continue friendship with him, even he'll be back in Texas.

**President Bush.** Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you and the Vice Presidents for greeting me. I've known these men for a long time, and I have come to admire them for their courage and for their determination to succeed. I am also here to herald the passage of the SFA/SOFA as a reminder of our friendship and as a way forward to help the Iraqi people realize the blessings of a free society.

And the work hasn't been easy, but it has been necessary for American security, Iraqi hope, and world peace. And so, Mr. President, thank you for your friendship, and thank you for your hospitality. I'm looking forward to meeting all the folks who are involved in the political process—leading this political process. And I am just so grateful

that I had a chance to come back to Iraq before my Presidency ends.

**President Talabani.** You are welcome.

**President Bush.** Thank you.

**President Talabani.** They want a picture with you, Mr. President.

**President Bush.** Oh, absolutely.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:01 p.m. at the Salam Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Presidents Tariq al-Hashimi and Adil Abd Al-Mahdi of Iraq. The President also referred to SFA, the strategic framework agreement; and SOFA, the status of forces agreement.

### Remarks at a Signing Ceremony for the Strategic Framework Agreement and the Status of Forces Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters in Baghdad

December 14, 2008

**Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.**

In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate. I would like to welcome the President of the United States, President George W. Bush. I would like to welcome you here as a guest of Iraq. You have stood by Iraq and the Iraqi people for a very long time, starting with the—getting rid of the dictatorship, to fight—helping the Iraqis to fight terrorism.

Your visit today to Iraq, Mr. President, comes after the signing of the agreement between the two countries, which represents the solid foundation and draws a roadmap that will govern and guide the relationship between the two states.

I believe that Iraq, we have performed and have done great work in a cooperative and integrated way in fighting terror. We have succeeded in Iraq, and we hope that efforts also around the world will succeed in defeating terrorism.

Today, Iraq is moving forward in every field. Through the new Iraqi political system, we are working very hard through this, as well as developing the Iraqi economy, and reconstruction of Iraq. We are doing all of this in order for Iraq to restore its rightful place among nations and among the world, and away from the previous reckless policies